DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 321 723 HE 023 774

AUTHOR	Marshall, William J. A.
TITLE	Power: An Administrator's Guide along the Corridors of Arrogance.
INSTITUTION	American Association of Univ. Administrators, Washington, D.C.; ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Jul 90
CONTRACT	RI88062014
NOTE	14p.
AVAILABLE FROM	American Association of University Administrators, P.O. Box 6221, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487 ($2.00).
PUB TYPE	Journal Articles (080) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
JOURNAL CIT	AAUA-ERIC Administrators Update; v7 n1-3 Jul 1990
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Effectiveness; *Administrator Role; Administrators; *College Administration; Higher Education; *Individual Power; Interpersonal Relationship; *Power Structure

ABSTRACT

University administrators must realize that past management styles they used to acquire their positions of campus power often become the future incarnations of their failure as administrators. The conundrum of power is that the less power a leader grants to people, the less powerful the leader becomes in the eyes of the people. Individuals have a need for power though they tend to deny the need's existence; acknowledgement of the power motive must precede any mastery of the conundrum making up the power-complex of leadership. Power has multiple descriptions as leaders utilize several power bases, including raw power, person power, legitimate power, coercion power, reward power, expert power, information power, and referent power. Power's scope and scale can be configured as a representation of x-axis and y-axis intercepts. The scope of power refers to the purpose or motive for which it is being employed, ranging from low to high congruence of one individual's motives with another individual's needs. The scale of power gauges the degree to which the resources of a position are brought to bear on the followers as the leader attempts to carry out his or her power motive. Includes 59 references. (JDD)

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VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1-3,* JULY 1990

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To become great it is first necessary to become little.
—St. Augustine

Power! The stuff of command. The melody of management. The derailer of careerists. And the sine qua non of leadership. None of us are really immune to the siren song of being made to feel important. And just when we get to that point of feeling important, we hear admonitions, not only from philosopher/saints of old like Augustine but also from the very top of today's corporate America. Ralph Bailey, former chair and CEO of Conoco, recently confided: "You must make it known within the organization, and demonstrate it by your own personal actions, that power must be exercised very carefully...and done so with a great deal of humility and compassion" (Badarraco and Ellsworth 1989).

On today's campuses, power is fragmented. Information floats wildly throughout the system. Rumors of improper use of power by administrators move through the grapevines of faculty ranks like fire through August wheat. It requires an unusually perceptive form of fine-tuned managerial skill to lead the atomistic forces of a collegiate faculty. The faculty, like so many individual atoms careening off each other in unorchestrated fashion, have precious few opportunities for concerted action.

Running a university is very much like being at the helm of a giant supertanker. You can spin the steering wheel as much as you like, but it takes many miles of forward movement before the ship starts turning. The faculty, staff, and students of a university today are very much like the supertankers: None of them will turn on a dime!

But what of the administrators? Couldn't they turn on a dime? In fact, what ever happened to all those promising department chairs, deans, and central administration-types who, still enjoying the thrills of managerial adolescence, never matured into fully developed leaders? Had they not mastered the curious algebra of every manager's existence that "Leadership equals Power"? Or were they still ingenuously intrigued with the unbalanceable equation, "Power equals Leadership"?

Perhaps—just perhaps—they never came to realize that the greatest danger facing them as administrators was not so much the reality of power but the incredible illusion of it. Perhaps again, they only belatedly realized that the past management styles that got them to their positions of power on campus—the erstwhile symbols of their success—instead of keeping them in such positions, became the future incarnations of their failure as administrators. Until the epithet marking Clark Kerr's stormy tenure as president of UCLA—"I left as I came...fired with enthusiasm"—stops littering the managerial graveyard of academe, campus administrators (read, managers occupying positions of leadership) will perforce learn to live on the edge of dismissal.

Such are the issues this paper confronts: (1) the conundrum of the power-complex, (2) a delineation of power's multiple descriptions, and

(3) a configuration of power's scope and scale.

The power-less administrator lacks support from above and credibility from below. Anticipating resistance, the power-less feel acutely insignificant and will thus act out the need to dominate. Whereas the powerfull can afford to be expansive, the power-less become reclusive, jealously guarding their eroding share of the turf. Not having an internal seat of control over their own lives, power-less administrators mask the loss by exerting control over the lives of others. In this sense, it is not power—not even absolute power—but power-less-ness that corrupts. Such is the first conundrum of power.

This conundrum—the less power a leader grants to the people, the less powerful the leader becomes in the eyes of the people—is perhaps the most difficult one for beginning managers to master (cf. Marshall 1987). The fact that it is not mastered well explains why so many have derailed from the leadership track. Like lambs being led to the slaughter, they buy into the Machiavellian maxim: "The first policy of power is to hold onto it; the second is to expand it" (1532 [1963]). This Machiavellian prescript has been cashiered by those who have been at the pinnacles of American corporate power: "I don't think the most important thing for a CEO is to keep his job. The most important thing is to be happy and productive in what you are doing" (Braham 1985).

Power, like love, expands by giving (cf. Forisha and Goldman 1981). The more you give, the more you receive. Lao Tzu's fifth century B.C. *Tao Te Ching,* verse 22, expresses this conundrum perfectly: "When letting go of what I am, I become what I might be. When I let go of what I have, I receive what I need" (Heider 1985).

The Need for Power. Power is a need, yet unlike our other needs—achievement, affiliation, recognition—we have a tendency to deny its very existence. The reason people gravitate toward positions of leadership is precisely because of this unmet, albeit denied, need—the need for power. Unsuccessful managers accumulate power for intensely personal reasons. They have a great desire to achieve, to get ahead of others, to consider their way as the better way (Spayd 1989).

To admit, however, that power is being sought for its own sake borders on the indecent. To avoid such indelicacies, aspirants to leadership positions have been known to mask their power motives under such guises as claiming the need to further a vision of reform or claiming the need to become a role model for others to emulate. In fact, "the power complex contains many elements that are essentially contradictory" (Sanford 1973, p. 145). JFK, at least, was not complex about his own motives when during the campaign he unabashedly blurted, "I run for president because that's where the power is" (Smith 1988).

To grasp what is taking place in the fast-paced game of higher education management, it is important that the players understand the forces driving them. Because people can control within themselves only those forces they can reflect upon and name, then acknowledgment of the power motive within us must precede any mastery of the conundrum making up the power-complex of leadership. To deny or mask the existence of an active power-drive within us, however, is to deprive ourselves of the very means to control it. Why? Because you can't control what you deny exists!

The halls of academe are by no means hallowed or impervious to this duplicitous denial. When 29 department heads at a Big Ten institution were asked to rank in order the "power" of all departments within the

university, a remarkable spread of consistency appeared in the rankings of the departments perceived as being most or least powerful. Further, respondents for the most part believed that the very posing of the question was at once imposing, illegitimate, and upsetting! (Pfeffer 1981).

Reports in the Literature. If the acceptance of a power drive is an uncomfortable admission for a potential leader to acknowledge, then the conspicuous neglect the phenomenon of power receives in the professional management literature is even more discomfiting. In Peter Drucker's two monumental works on management (1974; 1985), the term "power" does not appear once in the books' 32 pages of indices. As a further case in point, the popular *Academic Administrator Grid* (Blake, Mouton, and Williams 1981) also fails to discuss the subject of power, no matter that 10 of the 350 bibliographic entries are by authors who have published widely on the topic of power. A review of a random selection of 10 textbooks on management and organizational behavior reveals that less than 3 percent of the total number of pages even addresses the issue of power and authority (Kotter 1979). A further analysis of over 2,000 articles appearing between 1955 and 1975 in *Harvard Business Review* shows that only 0.25 percent have the term "power" in their titles (Kotter 1979). Parenthetically, the author accepts as synonymous the terms "power" and "authority" (McGaan 1974; Weissenberg 1971), which is consistent with what the father of pragmatism, Charles S. Peirce, states: "Where there is no practical difference, there is no difference at all" (Peirce 1923 [1956]).

This curious inconsistency between the obvious relevance of power to management and leadership and its lack of serious treatment in the professional press becomes even curiouser when one considers from experience the interminable power plays that make or break an administrator in today's organizations.

A Delineation of Power's Multiple Descriptions

On today's campuses, the power of the institution is diffused both downward, through the layers of staff officers, and "across-ward," into the faculty governance structures, rather than exclusively husbanded by the transitory figure at the top. It is precisely because of this inherent ambiguity of power that waves of misapprehension flow through the ranks of the faculty. A central responsibility of the campus CEO, therefore, is to define the ambit of his or her powers vis-a-vis both the formal administrative structure of the organization and the various aspects of the faculty governance system.

For the purposes of this paper, it suffices to emphasize the lowest common denominator found in all descriptions and definitions of power: A elicits a desired response from B while A is simultaneously amenable to a countervailing influence from B. The influence that is power then is a two-way street. This relationship also forms the core concept of leadership: "The task of a leader is to get people from where they are to where they have not been...to bridge the gap between what is and what is yet to be" (Kissinger 1980). What then are the power bases of leaders?

Organizational structure provides the topside scaffolding of power. Such position power—the first broad base—is **raw power:** a do-it-because-I-said-so kind of power. **Person power**—the second broad base—provides the intangible underside of power where the prerequisites for leadership abound: trust, respect, and the capacity to persuade. If

power is the ability to exercise a manager's will, then leadership is the capacity to get cooperation while doing the exercising. A leader's resultant style will thus be seen as a fine-tuned reflection of his or her ability to balance the yin-yang of position power with that of person power. The remainder of this section on definitions and descriptions provides a six-point structural synthesis of the innumerable power bases reflected in the general literature on the subject.

Legitimate Power. The most formal and fundamental of the power bases derives from a manager's position within the organization. Legitimate Power instills compliance from followers, not so much because of the person issuing the orders but because of the follower's respect and/or fear of the office from which the orders come. This power base is effective when dealing with situations in which followers want to know what the score is at all times with respect to their roles, behaviors, and responsibilities. Such followers, by conforming to the rules, policies, and procedures of the organization, reduce their feelings of anxiety by minimizing risk taking (cf. Stahelski and Frost 1987). Such followers also realize that the organization has power and that they become partakers in that power through the process of submitting and identifying with the organization (Galbraith 1983). Thus, by sharing in the organization's power, they come to partake in the illusion of its exercise.

An overuse of this power base will lay the groundwork for a general dysfunction within the organization, resulting in undue emphasis on procedure, the impersonalization of relationships, alienation of highly trained professionals, a minimization of commitment to the goals of the organization, and a general resistance to change (Anderson 1968). This abuse ultimately produces—in the words of Valery Giscard d'Estaing—the "we versus them" mentality of those at the top who have lost touch with those they are supposed to govern (Hoagland 1988). This insularity of that clubby group at the top is but a prelude to "topplement" as trenchantly recorded in the recollection of a southern governor's aside to President Carter at Camp David in 1978: "Mr. President, you are not leading this nation. You're just managing the government. You don't see enough of the right people anymore" (Perry 1984).

Coercion Power. "Do-it-or-else" is the position power that can enforce sanctions whenever noncompliance with directives is evident. It has the effect of sand on a well-oiled machine. The threat of sanctions induces greater conformity than does the use of sanctions themselves (Kipnis 1976). The more admired the leader, the more readily will followers accept the implied use of penalties (French, Morrison, and Levinger 1960). When all other power bases have eroded, a manager may be more inclined to use covert and coercive means to obtain ends, thus making fear, arousal, and stealth the technique of influence (Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma 1973). This power base, however, can be influential in times of crisis when a benevolent-dictator is needed.

The *Tao Te Ching* says it all:

Too much force on a group will destroy it. The best group process is delicate. The leader who tries to control the group through force does not understand group process. Force will cost a leader the support of his/her members. Leaders who push think they are facilitating process, when in fact they are blocking process. They think their positions give them absolute power when in fact their behavior

diminishes respect. The wise leader emphasizes being rather than doing (Heider 1985).

Thus, people will work harder for a leader who exercises restraint than one who exercises coercion (Zander and Curtis 1962).

Reward Power. The last of the power bases that is organizationally derived—as a function of position—is also the least effective (Fisher 1984). No relationships are found between the quality of job performance and the issuance of promotions, bonuses, and the like (cf. Freiberg and Hellweg 1985). Perhaps highly motivated followers perceive such an attempt at leadership as a shrewd management technique to link the organization's reward system with increased productivity. And because that is all this power base is—the granting of positive reenforcement to motivate productive work—it is likely to misfire when used with highly productive followers whose source of motivation is internal. Yet another reason for employing the Reward Power base is to neutralize existing pockets of resistance within the organization (Lawler 1971). But rewards do not change attitudes permanently and in fact can exacerbate the situation by increasing levels of resentment when the rewards themselves are perceived as being withheld by the administration for allegedly punitive reasons (Foa and Foa 1975).

It is well to bear in mind Machiavelli's advice to Lorenzo the Magnificent: "Liberality of rewards could not guarantee that the Prince would be held in high esteem by his followers...; [therefore,] it is better to be feared than to be loved [as a consequence of such liberality]" (Machiavelli 1532 [1963]). And if leaders overly engage in the use of these three position-oriented power bases when followers are experiencing role ambiguity, conflict, and job-related stress, then the quality of job performance will significantly diminish (Stahelski and Frost 1987). Thus, the following less obtrusive person-defined power bases must be employed if the quality of job performance is expected to improve. In this approach lies the genius of leadership, wherein compliance is achieved through willing commitment.

Expert Power. The first of the person-defined power bases is seen in leaders who bring order and structure to the organization by systematizing procedures and marshaling resources effectively. When leaders communicate upward to boards and laterally to their organizational counterparts, they make use of their Expert Power; however, when they communicate downward through the ranks, they make use of their Legitimate Power base (Freiberg and Hellweg 1985). The expertise of the leader must be about a specific area that followers both value and need to perform their tasks productively. That area? Management and leadership! Although Legitimate Power flows from the position and brings with it the full authority of the organization, it does not per se confer any leadership abilities. The power base of expertise does, however. Without this person-defined power base, the occupant in a position of leadership cannot fully assume the full responsibilities of office. The resultant inaction creates a "power vacuum," causing the diffusion of power to peers and followers.

Expert Power is perhaps the most consistently effective kind of power base for leaders in academe (Fisher 1984). Because of an old aphorism attributed to the Foreign Legion, however—"It is better to have one idiot in charge than two geniuses"—the more experts in a group, the less effective their expertise becomes. Given the research that implies persons

of high status will outrank in influence persons of high expertise (Torrance 1955), then it becomes evident what a heady mix of influence results when the Expert Power base and the Legitimate Power base are combined.

Information Power. The capital of this country is full of people of power, but like the electricity that powers modern life, the wind blows, the rain falls, and the power is cut off. Only the true power broker will know if and when the transmitter will be repaired and the current restored. Timeliness of the information is critical. It is for this reason that bureaucracy has been nefariously described as expanding the freedom of those on top by giving them the power to restrict the freedom (read, information) of those below. Leaders using this power base seek to control their environments by identifying issues, clarifying questions, and describing alternative approaches to problem solving.

This power base becomes a curious amalgam of both the person and the position. Without the position, one will not necessarily have access to privileged information, and without some specific personal characteristics, the rank and title of the position will not necessarily entitle one to such access. Outstanding administrators know how to tap into the information networks of the informal organization and rely less on the hierarchical structures of the formal organization (Miller 1983). The rank of administrator can be a detriment when traversing the corridors of the informal organization unless it is offset with that special, indefinable set of personal attributes that spell "leader."

Referent Power. "Do-it-because-it-will-benefit-the-organization" is the message coming from leaders who inspire followers to identify with their values and visions. This power base is an interplay between the follower's desire to be affiliated with the leader and the leader's capacity to provide the charismatic allure of hope and promise of improving conditions. Leaders who are liked and trusted by others will exert influence over these others. Charismatic leaders inspire trust and confidence and can capitalize on people's natural tendency to cooperate and be part of an exciting and potentially significant activity. The people simply need a reason to do so, and the Referent/Charismatic/Affiliative Power base provides it.

One final caveat is in order: Although this power base is clearly a characteristic of the person, its effectiveness must be couched within the proper scaffolding of the organization's position power structure. Attractive personal qualities are less likely to influence behavior in unstructured settings (Godfrey, Fiedler, and Hall 1959). The more structured the environment, the more effective this Referent Power base becomes. Ultimately, however, the real test of power lies in the acceptance of an administrator's authority by others (Jay 1967).

A Configuration of Power's Scope and Scale

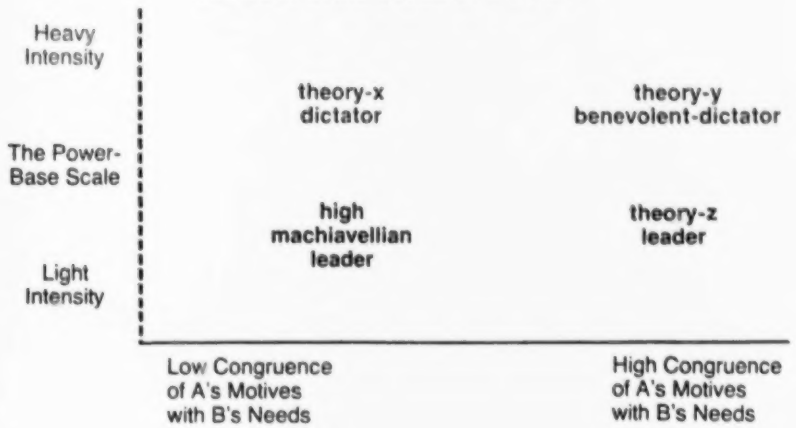
Some inevitable conclusions are thrust upon us from this discussion. First, power is not a thing; it is a perception (cf. Burns 1979). And as is so often true in other areas of human endeavor, it is not the reality of an event but the perception of the reality that is so important. The second inescapable feature of power is its multidimensional nature as a three-way "chem-mystical" interplay of person, position, and follower(s). If position alone were involved, we would be talking about "physics"; but the preceding discussions have effectively demolished the premise of position as the prime source of power. Instead, what we

are dealing with is the alchemy of perceptions—perceptions that induce people to willingly obey orders and to respond with alacrity to the charisms of leaders. To effectively relate the ingredients of power's perceptual chemistry, the concepts of "scope" and "scale" become convenient. The Scope of Power refers to its extent along a horizon of possibilities with respect to the purpose or motive for which it is being employed. The Scale of Power is a vertical dimension that gauges the degree to which the resources of a position are brought to bear on the followers as the leader attempts to carry out his or her power motive.

By casting the concept of scope and scale into a representation of x-/y-axis intercepts (see figure 1), we have a schema for portraying

FIGURE 1

THE SCOPE AND SCALE OF POWER



The Power-Motive Scope

several sets of power relationships. At the left end of the x-axis of scope, the power motive is of a highly personalized and self-serving nature, which sometimes results from a high need for achievement or other state of satisfying needs done at the expense of the followers' needs or as a consequence of motives stemming from the schemes of darker intent. Understandably, the degree of congruence between the power wielder's motive and the follower's needs would be less than one (unity) at this location along the axis. Compliance rather than commitment would be the norm expected of the follower.

As the scope of the power motive becomes less inner directed and more outer directed, the degree of congruence between the power wielder and follower approaches near unity at the extreme right end of the x-axis. Here, the power motive becomes more social than personal, as the altruistic need to influence others for the common good becomes readily perceivable to the eyes of the beholder. Thus, with growing congruence, the willingness of followers to become actively committed to the directions of the leader will likewise increase instead of remaining just fearfully compliant.

As the Scope of Power deals with the "why" and the "for what purpose" dimension of motive, the Scale of Power deals with the vertical dimension

of "how" and "by what means" we dip into the resources of the various power bases themselves. The low end of the y-axis represents the "carrot" end, where the employment of resources contained in any given power base is relatively unobtrusive and oblique. As the more direct and full use of a given power base is brought to bear on the perceptions of the follower(s), however, we move into the high-intensity "stick" end of the spectrum, where innuendo, threat, the application of sanctions, the withholding of rewards, and the like are fully used.

When congruence of the power motive is low (the x-axis) and intensity of the power base's use is light (the *y*-axis), the leader's behavior is both subtle and Machiavellian. The essence of this quadrant's behavioral style is best captured in the Machiavellian prescript that "all men are motivated by self-interest...; [therefore, they] should play their friends as pawns on a chessboard, one against another." In a glance, this phenomenon occurs whenever a follower willingly executes the quasi-legal or quasi-ethical suggestions implicitly authorized by the leader's body English—even though unauthorized in spoken and written English. Oliver North found himself in this predicament: follow the leader's will or the law's word? As the recent trial testimony of Colonel North revealed, nothing so explicit as a direct presidential order to resupply the Contras illegally was in evidence. Instead, the president's implicit power motive wish became North's explicit marching orders.

At this same location along the x-axis but halfway up the y-axis is the flavor of a management style evoked by Teddy Roosevelt's famous line, "Speak softly and carry a big stick. You will go far." And if you go too far along this dimension, you will end up at the heavy-intensity, big-stick quadrant characteristic of the classic Theory-X dictator. No subtle pressure here—instead, what we have is an explicit unmasking of the full panoply of power that can be brought to bear at the sign of the least resistance by the power-less follower(s). Indicative of the quadrant's motif is Eric Hoffer's sentiment: "Our sense of power is more vivid when we break a man's spirit than when we win his heart."

Remaining at the heavy-intensity, big-stick end of the y-axis but moving across to the high-congruence end of the x-axis, we arrive at the fairly commonly observed quadrant housing the Theory-Y benevolent dictator. The management ethos of this quadrant is neatly summarized in Julius Caesar's "Absolute power is all right so long as you are careful"; John F. Kennedy's "The president is rightly described as a man of extraordinary powers. Yet, it is also true that he must wield those powers with extraordinary limitations" (Sorensen 1963); and Sun Tzu's "To fight and conquer in all your battles is not the supreme excellence. Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting."

Finally, the convergence of the high-congruence end of the x-axis with the light-intensity aspect of the y-axis results in the estimable Theory-Z leader. While much can be said about this singular and powerful style of leadership, the Sun King (Louis XIV) said it all: "Power is the ability to show up late for a meeting and have the people thrilled when you arrive!"

Power wielders draw from their own power bases those resources relevant to their own motives. Wherever an administrator may be along the Scope of Power dimension—from motives of a self-serving nature to motives of an eleemosynary nature—then his or her ability to influence others will be accepted, provided, of course, that the followers buy into the motives or, at the very least, are generally indifferent to them.

Conclusion

"By doing nothing we change nothing. And by changing nothing we hang on to what we understand—even if it's the bars of our own prison" (John Le Carre in *The Russia House*). Kierkegaard expressed a similar thought when he observed that life is lived forward but understood backward. Occupants of positions of leadership must make sense of the past if they hope to understand the future. Only by coming to understand the patterns that form in their own behavior do they get to know their capabilities and true potential.

The effective use of managerial power today is an accumulation of nuances. It is a hundred things done a little better; a failure is a hundred things done a little worse. Power is not one big breakthrough. The quest for power usually begets a need to maintain a relentless pace in the upward-is-better race. The price? Loneliness. Power corrodes personal relationships. Real friendship does not just happen in high places. High places harden the heart to the point of casting each encounter into a calculus of "What can this person do for me?" Where is the campus administrator—bled by faculty demands, student demands, and family demands—who after a number of years has not wound up saying, "What's left of me? Who am I?"

Roger Porter, a Harvard scholar on the presidency and presently on loan as the President's economic and domestic policy adviser, has given additional credence to these thoughts: "We have tended to equate success and action. We sometimes confuse action with accomplishment. A president is constantly under enormous pressure 'to do something.' It is vitally important for him to have his emotions under control" (Sidey 1989). Socrates's "Know thyself" applies here, as power over self must precede power over others.

The words of the ancient Chinese philosopher-general Sun Tzu are apt: "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer defeat. And if you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."

Careers in management, like the derailed destinies of history's empires, have collapsed because the wielders of rank did not have the wisdom to use their power wisely and well. Whenever the psychological need for self-assurance drives a manager to prove that he or she is bigger, better, or stronger than others, then the arrogance of power has raised its ugly head—the point when such managers begin living out the assumption that force is the ultimate proof of superiority (cf. Fulbright 1966). The more questionable one's self-assurance, the more exaggerated the sense of power and mission.

The perversion of power is by no means limited to the Machiavellian business of using evil means to achieve and justify noble ends. Instead, what constitutes power in its most corruptive sense is that we enjoy it for its own sake while simultaneously denying the very act of its enjoyment (Galbraith 1983). This is sheer pornography! Whenever some aspect of human experience is treated as inherently shameful, it is not likely to be referred to openly and tends to be accompanied by feelings of guilt (Gorer 1955). Pornography therefore applies to what is perceived as being shameful, applies to an activity that is enjoyed secretly, produces feelings of guilt after repressing the initial feelings of enjoyment, and generates fantasies as a mechanism for dealing with the repressed needs.

"Fantasies color the perceptions we have of our own behaviors, even to the point of convincing us that our actions are not what they seem to be" (Gorer 1955). If the fantasies that titillate in the pornography of sex do not exist in reality, then perhaps no better way exists for a manager to strip the pornographic value assigned to power than to openly admit the need to have power. A case in point is that old line often heard from administrators who in the act of disclaiming that they are using their power reluctantly—"This hurts me more than it hurts you"—have probably merged fantasy with reality by indulging in pure pornography.

Perhaps in our pasts, in a hurry to get ahead, we did everything badly for the sake of the future. Now that we have arrived at our goal of landing a position of leadership, we realize that we must begin doing everything right for the sake of staying in that position. The lesson of power is a simple one: There is a shortage of oxygen in high places. It is not hard to fall victim to the kind of headiness that comes from rubbing elbows with the mighty. Life in the stratosphere is limited but not limiting!

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Administrator's Update is prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Series Editor is Glenn M. Nelson, Associate Professor of Higher Education at the University of Pittsburgh. Copies of Administrator's Update may be ordered for $2.00 each from the American Association of University Administrators, PO Box 6221, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487. Payment must accompany all orders under $15.

This publication was partially prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. ED RI-88-062014. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the Department. **ISSN: 0742-6542**